

The Clintons and American National Security

Bob Dylan in 1964 told us the times they are a-changin. He also urged senators, congressmen, to please to heed the call. That call has been proclaimed by the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* that have become part of the vast right-wing conspiracy as a result of their strong stories about the improprieties, scandals, and the greediness of former President Bill Clinton and Hillary Clinton, whose tax-exempt Clinton Foundation received money from seven foreign governments, as well as from others, while Hillary was serving as secretary of state.

Apart from the serious political and moral problems involved, there is also the appearance of a conflict of interests between public interests and private behavior. At the heart of this is the possible violation of the United States Constitution (Article 1, section 9) which states that "No person holding any office of profit or trust... shall, without the consent of the Congress, accept of any present, emolument, office or title, of any kind whatever, from any king, prince, or foreign state."

The various governmental bodies, the Senate, the House of Representatives, the State Department, all ban cash payments from foreign governments to U.S. officials. Among those foreign governments giving donations to the Clinton Foundation while Hillary was secretary are Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, the UAE, and Algeria. It is also worth noting two things in the same period. The first is that 22 of the 37 corporations nominated for a State Department award, and 6 of the eventual 8 winners, gave donations to the Foundation. The second is that Bill Clinton obtained \$48 million in speaker fees during those years.

Linked to the conduct of the Clintons is the issue of United States national security. It is now revealed that four contributions, not publicly disclosed, to the Foundation came from the chairman of a Toronto-based uranium mining company named Uranium One that owned uranium mines in the United States, in Wyoming, as well as Kazakhstan. As a result of transactions beginning in 2009, the Russian state-owned atomic agency Rosatom bought a 17 per cent share in Uranium One. To obtain the majority share in Uranium One that it wanted, Rosatom needed approval from a special U.S. committee. A deal that required the approval of a number of U.S. agencies including the State Department, made in 2010 allowed Russia, specifically ARMZ an arm of Rosatom, to begin the process of gaining total control of Uranium One in 2013.

Investors in Uranium One had been giving money to the Clinton Foundation between 2005 and 2011. On June 29, 2010 Bill Clinton for a speech in Moscow was paid \$500,000 from the Renaissance Capital investment bank that has links to the Kremlin.

In addition, the Clinton Foundation received donations, more than \$8 million and pledges of \$20 million, from Interpipe, a Cyprus company owned by a Ukrainian oligarch named Victor Pinchuk, that violated the sanctions against Iran by selling oil pipeline to it in 2011 and 2012.

Uranium One is one of the world's largest uranium producers. Russia now controls about one-fifth of all uranium producing capacity in the United States. Together with the former Soviet nations, Russia controls almost half of the world's uranium supply, and half of the world's capacity for uranium enrichment. By comparison, the United States controls only 3 per cent of global uranium supply, and imports more than 90 per cent of the uranium required for its nuclear reactors.

Rosatom is Russia's national nuclear corporation, and has Uranium One as its international mining unit. It is a major

part of Russia's industrial economy, now supplying about 17 per cent of Russia's power.

Even more important for U.S. foreign policy is that Rosatom is an agent of Russian foreign policy. It already has agreements to build or supply parts for reactors in a number of countries including Turkey, India, France (Cadarache), and Vietnam. It is planning various deals with a number of countries, Finland, Ukraine, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom. Its ambition is to become the world's largest supplier of uranium.

Rosatom is planning to build more than 20 new power units in India for the peaceful use of nuclear power. It will build eight new nuclear power reactors in Saudi Arabia, allowing the country to increase its nuclear capacity more than sixfold over the next 15 years. On April 23, 2015 it signed a number of agreements with Argentina on hydroelectric, nuclear, and fossil-based energy. It will build part of the country's power plant as well as construct a hydroelectric dam, and provide access to Russian nuclear power technology.

The implications of all this are important. The activities of Rosatom are part of the policy of President Vladimir Putin to create so-called "national champions" that represent the interests of the state in international commerce. Putin did not invent this concept but he wrote about it in his doctoral dissertation in 1997, and in the lead article in the *Journal of the St. Petersburg Mining Institute* in 1999.

The essence of his article is that Russia's economic development would be based on its natural resources, especially energy sources, that would compete domestically and globally. These resources would be controlled by the state through companies linked to the power structure. They would become "national champions" active on behalf of national interests. Rosatom and Gazprom, the Russian national gas company, are two of those champions.

Gazprom was set up in 1989, Russia's first state-corporate enterprise. The company is a joint stock company, partly privatized but it is controlled by the Russian state that controls 50.23 % of the shares in through its holdings in three other companies.

Gazprom is a very large operation producing over 15 per cent of the world production of natural gas and controlling about one-fifth of gas reserves of the world.

The important factor is that Gazprom supplies more than a quarter of Europe's gas. Its series of pipelines connect the flow of gas through Ukraine and under the Baltic Sea to the European countries. It supplies Germany, with nearly 40% of its natural gas need.

The anti-trust commission of the EU, after a long delay, is filing charges against Gazprom, the largest supplier of gas to Europe, on the ground it has been abusing its dominant position in the European gas market in a number of ways. However, the anti-trust charges are against a company that has been for Putin an important force in Russian foreign policy.

Putin's idea was that the large corporations in strategic centers should be concerned not only to seek maximum profits but should advance the national interests of the country, a policy familiar from that of Charles de Gaulle when president of France. Gazprom, by selling gas abroad under the market price, and being a part of economic nationalism, not only undercuts the free market, but also boosts the image of Russia.

That image is being boosted by the "national champions" not only in the oil, gas, and uranium sectors, but also in those of aviation, transport, pipelines, and metallurgy. These national champions may not always be complete instruments of the Kremlin but they are agents of Putin's policies. Whatever else Bill and Hillary Clinton have done in their political and

business activities, whatever the corruption or conflict of interest with which they have been involved, they did little to check Russia's increasing control of important resources and increasing political influence, as well as disregard for international order. As Bob Dylan suggested, the senators and members of Congress should do so.

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