

Trump Will Win This Round With the Deep State

by Conrad Black



When the cant and emotionalism subside, the Helsinki summit will go down in history as a turning point in this American president's struggle to disembowel the bipartisan regime of complacency and lassitude he successfully ran against. It may also be a modest inflection point in U.S.-Russian relations.

President Trump knew what he was getting into in holding a press conference with Vladimir Putin. He knew the press would ask him whose version of Russian meddling in the 2016 election does he believe? Putin's? Or that of former U.S. intelligence agency directors John Brennan, James Clapper, and James Comey? The question came and President Trump quickly moved to the missing Clinton servers and 33,000 erased Clinton emails under congressional subpoena.

Trump's response causes the ultimate evocation to the voters in this epic battle that has been lurching and raging over

America and astonishing the world for two years. Many of the president's political supporters expressed genuine regret. U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) said Trump had "missed an opportunity" to confront Putin publicly, and Newt Gingrich said that the president's remarks were a "serious error," requiring immediate correction. The departing NeverTrumpers like House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.), and Senators Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.), Bob Corker (R-Tenn.), and John McCain (R-Ariz.), and even Trump late-comers like Senate Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), were more critical. The Democrats offered almost uniform expressions of shock and anger that the president had humiliated the country.

They all missed the point. The real issue surged to the surface and into the ether in a blinding flash about five minutes after the joint press conference ended in the form of a tweet from former CIA director [John Brennan](#).

Perhaps the most virulent (and fearful) Trump-hater of all, Brennan described Trump's public performance (not any imagined private betrayals) as "exceeding the threshold of 'high crimes and misdemeanors' and justified impeachment" as "treasonous" and "imbecilic." Although this was defamatory lunacy, it attracted unctuous hand-wringing and robotic nodding of talking heads among Trump's most consistent cable network detractors. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) said it was clear Putin "had something on" Trump.

What Trump Didn't Do—and What He *Actually Did*

The president could have made the point that former U.S. Ambassador Jack Matlock made last week that the intelligence community had in fact only tentatively concluded that there was official Russian meddling of a very insignificant and ineffectual kind in the 2016 election. He could have dwelt on the fact that all that has really been unearthed is about \$10 million of rather vague advertisements on Facebook decrying the general condition of the country, compared to an unprecedented \$250 million of Clinton attack ads against Trump

in that campaign.

And he could certainly have remarked that since Brennan and Clapper both had accused Trump of *colluding* with the Russians, and he had done nothing of the kind (as Putin affirmed), and since there was not a shred of evidence to corroborate that allegation or Clapper's claim that the Russians had tipped the election to Trump, and as both Clapper and Brennan, as well as Comey, had lied to Congress under oath in related matters, he, President Trump, put more faith in Putin's account of the absence of collusion than in the defamatory allegations of the former leaders of the American intelligence community. He might even have added that the United States had interfered countless times in the internal electoral processes, even primitive ones, of dozens of countries (including Russia) over many decades, and cautioned against excessive righteousness.

Trump did none of these things. Instead, he raised the ante.

Mueller's Indictment Stunt

The Russian meddling is nonsense. It was trivial and though it is almost inconceivable that Putin wasn't aware of it, that could never be proved. The president stated before the world that the U.S. intelligence community was so profoundly corrupted under his predecessor that it is less plausible than the chief occupant of the Kremlin on the subject of the late American election, which the directors of the intelligence agencies cooperated in trying to rig and then to undo, in stark and criminal violation of the Constitution. The incumbent president on one side and the former heads of the CIA, ODNI, and FBI on the other are accusing one another of heinous crimes of unconstitutional betrayal of the greatest offices of the republic.

Clearly, if to some extent implicitly, Donald Trump is saying that the latest Mueller accusations against this gang of Russian intelligence officials are a stunt to try to prop up the fraud that there was something suspect in Trump's pre-

election relations with the Russians. Naturally, this sent the Democratic leadership before the television cameras of their obsequious network supporters to tell Trump to stop calling it a witch-hunt and cancel the Putin meeting.

Maybe Newt Gingrich and other supportive Republicans are right, and maybe not. The entire political process is almost stalled in this death struggle between the former political establishment and the president. Because Attorney General Jeff Sessions is a self-emasculated nonentity and his deputy attorney general, Rod Rosenstein, is a long-time chum of the old praetorian guard of Mueller, Comey, et al., Mueller can continue his farce that can't get past pretend indictments of unextraditable Russians and further measures of semi-torture of Paul Manafort for alleged tax fraud many years before he met Trump.

Mueller will keep this charade running to the election, with Sessions and Rosenstein as nodding straight-men, and Trump can't slice the Gordian Knot yet because of the political repercussions of firing Sessions and his deputy. The voters will have to be the jury. This controversy will settle down, and after the Senate has dealt (affirmatively) with the Supreme Court nominee, all will be quiet until the campaign really heats up after Labor Day.

Strategically, Trump is correct: Russia is a paper tiger apart from its nuclear weapons, has a GDP smaller than Canada's, and Putin is conducting a clumsy imitation of Charles de Gaulle's elegant restoration of France as a serious power by being a nuisance to the Anglo-Americans in order to redeem the fiasco of the French surrender to the Nazis in 1940.

The danger with Putin is to drive Russia into the arms of China and Iran, and the goodwill of the Kremlin can be had by the United States for less than continuing the present NATO pocket-picking. NATO can be reformed and Russia can be made a semi-cooperative state of convenience. These are reasonable

goals and they are attainable.

Yes, There Was Illicit Meddling in the 2016 Election

What makes this controversy so unique, riveting, and infuriating, is the ability of the palsied Democratic leaders, with their media accomplices and dupes, to keep this dead pigeon of collusion alive by pretending Mueller is conducting a serious investigation; and that they may ride the traditional wave of midterm congressional losses for the administration to distract and paralyze the government with a fraudulent impeachment debate and hopeless Senate trial consuming much of 2019 and deferring the day of reckoning for the culprits of the Clinton campaign and the Justice Department and intelligence agencies.

They are trying to cover up the greatest illicit meddling in an American election in history: *by American intelligence agencies*. In their desperation since the defeat of the candidate they covertly supported, who would have covered it up for them, they have been trying to maintain the fraud of collusion and conflate it with the trivial and routine interventions of some Russian operatives in the 2016 election.

The president saw that the only way to resolve this is to campaign energetically in the midterms (which no president has really done before), in opposition to open borders, a rollback of tax cuts, and this dishonest and unconstitutional skullduggery. He should celebrate Labor Day by ordering the release of what the congressional committees have been demanding from Rosenstein for many months.

Trump could have handled things better in Helsinki, and should not have provoked a clarification from National Intelligence Director Dan Coats. But fundamentally he is right. And he will win.

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