

Coincidence or Collusion?
Posted On:December 31, 1969

My head reels to learn the FBI is exploring if our president is a willing agent of a foreign country? Surely this can't be true, can it? Are we seeing a coincidence: that President Trump just happens to believe the same things that Vladimir Putin does? Or do the Russians have something secret and embarrassing over him?

Until the Mueller report is released, we cannot know for certain which of these scenarios is credible. Many in Trump's base are prepared to believe anything he says, including his unremitting attacks on his own government agencies. Donald Trump announced in a public forum, standing beside Putin, that he believed Putin rather than his own Intelligence professionals that Russia had nothing to do with corrupting the 2016 election in Trump's favor.

For a man professing to be a Republican, a party consistent in its condemnation of Russia since the 1918 Communist Revolution, he astonishes the world regularly with his romance with Putin, and his obvious preference for every other authoritarian villain around the world. Is it just a matter of shared taste?

While we cannot yet know the outcome of the FBI investigation, we can assess a long list of things in plain sight that we do know. First, if Russia is Trump's puppet master, what does Putin want? What are his long-term policy goals?

Imperial Russia, the Soviet Union, and today's Russia have always had an ideological hostility toward the United States over whether liberal democracy (a system of checks and balances) or an authoritarian state should be the model for the world. That was what the Cold War was about, and Russia lost. Upon its collapse, newly emerging countries around the world were opting for an American-style rule of law and global system of cooperation. Some were ready, others not.

The countries that shared a history of Western Civilization (Western Europe, the British Commonwealth, and Japan), joined the global system that the US created as WWII ended. During the Cold War, these countries united in common defense as a NATO alliance and the European Union (EU), both dependent upon the economic and ideological support of the United States. Democracy had a lively run everywhere.

Russians are chess players who patiently play the long game. They, unlike us, are patient. Although they came late to the computer world, they quickly learned and immediately "weaponized" the system to use their oldest weapon: propaganda, disinformation, and racist divisiveness. Their subtle propaganda talents have been honed since the 1880s, and continued during and after Communism.

Putin believes that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a great disaster, not an opportunity to free Russia and bring it into the US-created world order. He resents the United States, fears NATO, hates the European Union, and wants to bring all down. Despite being a nuclear power, he knows that a direct confrontation with the US and Europe would destroy Russia. The wiser course for him is to promote discord so that NATO falls apart. He conspired with populists in the US, Britain, France, and Germany to hold divisive elections and promote chaos, and his puppets give him a free hand in intimidating his neighbors.

The US, their main enemy, presented them with an unusual opportunity. A decade ago, they identified a potential candidate for president who already shared many of their values, and they helped him win. Trump is a nativist (America First), a racist (not even subtle), admirer of dictators (strongmen), detester of "the global order," and an expert demagogue appealing to the unsophisticated. He is a wrecking ball against every American institution designed to protect our democracy: just what the Russians wanted.

Here is the dilemma: is Trump promoting Russian values because he shares them? Or is he doing so because they have bought him off or have something incriminating on him? Why has Trump met five times with Putin without any documentation of their meetings? Why does he want to leave NATO? Why does he abuse his own government, disdain the press (an important watchdog), and never cross Putin?

Coincidence, collusion, or corruption? All are in play.

683 words

Laina Farhat-Holzman is a historian, lecturer, and author of God's Law or Man's Law.

You may contact her at Lfarhat102@aol.com or www.globalthink.net.