



Australian Citizens Party

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Why did Australia risk its 'security' by interfering in the US presidential election?

The following release is an article by Robert Barwick in the 29 May 2019 Australian Alert Service, the weekly magazine of the Citizens Electoral Council. It questions the national security implications for Australia of the Trump administration's investigation of Australia's, specifically Alexander Downer's, role in providing the intelligence pretext for the FBI wiretaps on the Trump campaign on the now-disproven suspicion of collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia. It is remarkable how quiet the Australian government and media are being about this. Not mentioned in the following article is this reminder about Downer, which proves he is not above spying on Australia's "friends": in 2004, as Foreign Minister Downer was in charge of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS), the Australian branch of MI6, when it planted bugs in the Timor-Leste cabinet room to eavesdrop on the Timor-Leste government's deliberations about their negotiations with Australia over the rights to oil in the Timor Sea. Negotiation transcripts show Downer was trying to bully the Timorese, the poorest country on earth, into mostly giving up their oil claims. Former ASIS officer Witness K, who blew the whistle on this operation, said he decided to come forward after Downer took a highly-paid job as a consultant with Woodside Petroleum, which was the beneficiary of the treaty Downer negotiated. The government's ongoing cover-up of the Timor-Leste spying scandal, and prosecution of the whistleblower, speaks to the nefarious abuse of secrecy in intelligence operations. It is increasingly clear that this extends into Australia's participation in the Five Eyes intelligence partnership, which, as the evidence known so far indicates, mobilised in 2016 to sabotage the possibility that in the 2016 presidential election the American people might democratically back a change of US foreign policy in relation to Russia and regime-change wars.

The cornerstone of Australia's national security is its alliance with the United States. Beginning in World War II, the alliance continued and strengthened during the Cold War. Post-Cold War it has, if anything, intensified, with Australia participating in every US regime-change intervention, and taking a leading role in the diplomatic attacks on the USA's chief rivals, Russia and China. Then-Prime Minister John Howard's ultimate justification for Australia's participation in the illegal 2003 invasion of Iraq was to honour the US alliance on which our security depended. The attachment to the US alliance has become so intense that two former prime ministers, the late Malcolm Fraser and Paul Keating, have both criticised Australia's lack of foreign policy independence—Fraser described Australia's alliance partners, the USA and UK, in the title of his 2014 book as *Dangerous Allies*.

It should therefore be highly alarming to the Australian government that the President of the United States now views Australia not as a close ally, but with suspicion, due to the role of Australia's intelligence agencies in spying on his 2016 election campaign. It should also be concerning that President Trump has ordered his Attorney General to include Australia, as well as the UK, in his investigation of the fabrication of the so-called "Russiagate" hoax. What is strange, however, but also revealing, is that nobody in the Australian government or the mainstream state and corporate media are really talking about the national security implications of this scandal.

The role of Australia in establishing the Russiagate hoax hinges on former Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer. The AAS reported on Downer's curious participation in a 10 January 2018 article entitled, ["What has five eyes and wears fishnet stockings? The Australian link in the British intelligence operation to sabotage US-Russia cooperation"](#). In May 2016 Downer, then Australia's High Commissioner to London, met with then 28-year-old Trump campaign associate George Papadopoulos in the Kensington Wine Bar for drinks. Downer claims that Papadopoulos informed him that the Russian government had thousands of hacked Hillary Clinton emails that would damage her campaign. Downer said he passed this information on to Australia's intelligence agencies at the time, which subsequently passed it on to US intelligence. "That's just the end of the story; there's nothing else to it", Downer told the ABC's Matt Bevan in a 22 May interview for his podcast, "Russia, if you're listening". (Bevan's podcast is alone among Australian mainstream media in reporting on this in detail.)

We now know that Downer's information, along with the infamous dossier fabricated by former MI6 officer Christopher Steele, was instrumental in the FBI getting FISA warrants to spy on the Trump campaign. This set in train the Russiagate scandal that led to Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation of collusion between Russia and the Trump campaign, which derailed most of Trump's first two years as president, but which found no evidence of collusion. Now the tables have turned,

and Russiagate is being investigated as a hoax. The worry for Australian and British intelligence is that there is more to it than Downer admits, the revelation of which could be very damaging to the Five Eyes intelligence partnership, but beneficial to global relations.

Certainly George Papadopoulos is saying that there is more to it than Downer admits. Having gone to prison for a fortnight for falling into a perjury trap set by Mueller, Papadopoulos has recognised that his encounter with Downer was central to the way Russiagate unfolded, and has had time to piece together the sequence of events around it. Significantly, he claims that he did not tell Downer that the Russians had Hillary's emails, and that Downer was spying on him, the implication being that it was to fabricate intelligence.

In April 2016, prior to his meeting with Downer, Papadopoulos was encouraged to meet with Professor Joseph Mifsud, who was widely described in the Russiagate media reporting as having intelligence links to Russia. The opposite was true, as the US Congress established after much investigation; former US House Judiciary Committee chairman Devin Nunes, who conducted the investigation, insisted on Fox News on 5 May 2019: "Mifsud has an awful lot of ties to US, British, and Italian intelligence services"—i.e. the agencies that were actively opposed to Trump's foreign policy. It was Mifsud who told Papadopoulos that the Russians had Hillary's emails. If, as Papadopoulos insisted, he didn't pass this information on to Downer, it is clear that he was supposed to, so that Downer could report it had come from a Trump campaign official, to establish a basis for collusion, which Downer did anyway.

Everything else that is known about Downer and the Kensington meeting would confirm Papadopoulos's suspicions. Downer denied to Matt Bevan Papadopoulos's claim that he said he knew all about him, but admitted that the Israeli embassy "suggested" the meeting, then hurriedly insisted the Israelis didn't "organise" it. Israeli intelligence is very close to its US and British counterparts. Downer himself is deeply connected into British intelligence. As the AAS reported:

"As foreign minister he had been in charge of Australia's MI6, the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS). ASIS agents, who are usually recruited from the diplomatic corps, where indeed Downer started his career, are known to refer to Canberra as 'home office' and MI6 headquarters in London as 'head office'. ASIS and Australia's other intelligence agencies are part of the Five Eyes intelligence sharing alliance with the UK, USA, New Zealand and Canada; the popularised terms 'deep state' and 'secret state' refer to these interconnected intelligence agencies. After leaving politics, Downer stayed involved in this intelligence world. In 2008 he joined the advisory board of [secretive British firm Hakluyt & Co., a private intelligence company founded by 'former' officers of MI6](#). ... Downer resigned from Hakluyt & Co. when he was appointed High Commissioner in 2014, but has continued to attend group functions. Today the international advisory board of Hakluyt & Co. includes Sir Iain Lobban, the former director of GCHQ, the UK's top and most secretive intelligence agency."

Downer's own words, from his interview with Matt Bevan, are revealing of his orientation to the Five Eyes apparatus. First he tried to ridicule the idea of a conspiracy, saying, "This sort of idea that there is a kind of ASIS, ASIO, MI6, MI5, FBI, CIA, Ukrainian government or something like that, some conspiracy to bring down the Trump administration ... it's a little bit sad." Except that the list of intelligence agencies he gave is a very good description of the Five Eyes partnership, which in the next breath he declared his loyalty to: "If people tell me things like that, which I think are damaging to Western security interests, particularly to the security interests of the Five Eyes countries, expect me, Alexander Downer, former foreign minister of Australia, to be supporting Western interests against Russian intelligence. *You can count on me.*" In 9 May interview with Andrew Bolt on Sky News, Downer described himself as "part of the Five Eyes intelligence community" and a "warrior for the Western alliance".

The evidence is that British intelligence opposed Trump's stated desire to improve relations with Russia, and acted pre-emptively to undermine it, using assets including Alexander Downer and Christopher Steele. This was the real "interference" in the US election, but it has now backfired, and as a result Australia's shadowy intelligence relationships with the Five Eyes apparatus are now in the spotlight. These relationships are implicated in everything from [the 1975 dismissal of the democratically-elected Whitlam Labor government](#), to our involvement in regime-change wars based on lies, to the dangerous escalation of tensions against Russia and China. The Australian intelligence agencies and those who are determined to keep Australia dependent on the USA for security will be panicked, but to those who want Australia to have an independent foreign policy, this scrutiny is well overdue.